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ABSTRACT

Seven elementary, junior high, and high schools participate in the Memphis City Deregulation Program (MCDP), a school-based decision making program in which the principle of shared leadership is a key concept. Shared leadership requires a shift from traditional roles, responsibilities, and power relationships. This study focuses on 49 teachers in this program who assumed new roles as educational leaders, serving as department and grade-level chairs. Through semi-structured interviews, data were collected from these teachers and their principals (N=6) on their perceptions of the skills and training needed for teachers effectively to fill leadership positions in a school-based decision making program. Content analysis procedures were used to identify the perceptions of the principals and teachers about various aspects of school-based decision making. Specific topics examined included: skills, abilities, and attitudes teacher leaders brought to the job; skills, abilities, and attitudes that teachers involved in site-based decision making had to learn while on the job; areas in which these teachers needed to improve; extent to which teachers had been prepared to assume leadership roles in a site-based decision making structure; and how training for leadership and site-based decision making could be improved. (40 references) (IAH)

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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR SITE-BASED DECISION MAKING

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Introduction

As the 1980s came to a close, Memphis City Schools, "... the largest school system in the state of Tennessee and the eleventh largest in the nation..." (Memphis City Schools, 1990, p. 2), found itself faced with numerous problems. These problems ranged from low achievement scores to poor morale among the teachers.

Tennessee previously had instituted a state-wide reform effort in the form of a career ladder program. However, the objectives of this reform were never realized. The Memphis City District also had attempted a number of top-down improvement strategies to deal with its problems. Optional schools have been a part of the district for a number of years. Schools serving at-risk students have been improved through efforts such as Title 1. To effect greater change within the most needy schools, the district turned to restructuring. Unlike projects in Florida and California, this attempt at restructuring was not the result of a state mandate. The decision was made by local authorities to launch a reform effort in response to the complex problems within the district.

> The professional associations (Memphis Educational Association, MEA and National Educational Association, NEA) agreed that change was needed and worked cooperatively with central office in planning the project. The National Education Association (NEA) designated the seven schools as their Learning Laboratory site in Tennessee. A professional association representative was assigned to work closely with the project director in the SBDM planning and implementation. This person became an informal part of the SBDM bureaucracy and instrumental in planning and informing school councils about contractual and legal parameters surrounding personnel issues. (Etheridge, et. al., 1990, p. 10)

Memphis City schools began the initial implementation of a school-based, decision making program in seven schools during the 1989-90 school year. During the first year, those involved spent time on training, completing a needs assessment, and developing comprehensive improvement plans (Memphis City Schools, 1990). The seven schools chosen to participate in the pilot project include two feeder systems within the larger Memphis City school system.

> They serve two Memphis communities containing poverty Black populations. These schools, especially the secondary schools, have reputations as undesirable places to teach and have experienced the usual blight associated with inner city schools (i.e. low student achievement, violence, vandalism, teacher turnover, and derelict buildings). (Etheridge, et. al., 1990, p. 5)

TAAPT (Teachers, Administrators and Parents Together) became the plan by which school governance would be changed. Its premise was based on the idea that, "...principals, teachers and parents must have increased authority at the local school level accompanied by increased accountability" (Memphis City Schools, 1990, p. 7). In 1991,

seven Memphis City schools entered their second year of a special project designed to introduce school-based decision making to the district.

The schools were described as deregulated to denote their basic approach to decision making. The schools were encouraged to choose an organizational structure that came closest to meeting the needs of their students. Needs assessments were employed at each site and each school requested waivers from the district according to its needs. The district could request more information, grant the waiver, or reject it. The individual schools were not given control over their portion of the district budget and could not ask for extra money. However, the schools were given the freedom to provide more appropriate services based on the needs of their students. These schools were expected to take greater responsibility for decisions in the areas of instruction and supervision (Etheridge, et. al., 1990).

The original intent of the project was to involve teachers, parents, and students in shared decision making at the individual school site through the use of local school councils and professional advisory committees. "The local school council is the primary organizational vehicle through which the schools share decision making authority. The council operates for the school much as the school board functions for the school system" (Etheridge, et. al., 1990, p. 4). The professional advisory committee was comprised of teachers identified as leaders. These teachers were titled grade-level or department chairs. That committee conducted meetings, acted as a go-between with the administration, and served as a communication link within the staff.

When deregulation was first announced, all positions within the seven schools were declared open. Anyone interested in working within this structure was invited to apply. Those previously employed in the program schools who did not wish to work under deregulation were assigned to other city schools. All teachers and administrators in the city schools were allowed to apply for any opening. The interview and selection process was conducted by a panel consisting of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, three Memphis Educational Association teacher representatives, two parents, and one community member. The panel began with the selection of the school principals. After their selection, the principals then became members of the panel which chose the vice principals. The first teachers to be selected were those identified as grade-level or department chairs. These teachers also became members of the panel for the selection of teachers in their grades or departments.

Purpose

This investigation sought to answer questions about teachers' perceptions concerning training for a leadership role within a school-based decision making program. Specifically this study attempted to:

1. provide a description of those skills, abilities, and attitudes that teacher leaders brought to the job,
2. describe the skills, abilities, and attitudes that teachers involved in site-based decision making had to learn while on the job,
3. determine which skills, abilities, and attitudes were perceived as areas where these teachers still need to improve,
4. determine the extent to which these teachers felt that they had been prepared to assume leadership roles in a site-based decision making structure,
5. provide insights into the teachers' perceptions of how training for leadership and site-based decision making could be improved.

Theoretical Perspective

Site-based decision making is a restructuring effort that is being implemented in a number of schools across the nation as part of the reform of education. Shared leadership is a key concept for the success of any attempt to implement site-based improvement. The sharing of leadership requires a shift from traditional roles, responsibilities and power relations within the school.

The role of educational leader has traditionally been viewed as the responsibility of the principal. While still involved in leading, principals are beginning to share responsibility for leadership with teachers. In addition to their academic responsibilities, teachers may be expected to assume new tasks with far more discretion and responsibility than they had in the past. The changes being made in the organizational and administrative structure of schools will continue to have a major impact on the school leadership roles teachers are expected to fulfill. However, little has been done to assess the willingness or ability of these teachers to provide effective leadership.

Methods and Procedures

This study focused on the teachers serving as department and grade-level chairs from the seven schools within the Memphis City Deregulation Program. Memphis City Schools is a "... large, urban, predominantly poor and predominantly black school district

..." (Memphis City Schools, 1990, p. 4). These seven schools entered their second year of the Deregulated Schools Program in 1991. The project was designed to introduce school-based decision making to the district. The schools included three elementary schools (K-6), two junior high (7-9), and two high schools (10-12). The seven schools served student populations residing in Districts 5, 18, 19, 20, 21, 40, 41, 44, and 45, as indicated by the U.S. Census reports. Representative information concerning these districts was drawn from the 1980 Census report (most recent available report). This information is presented in Table 1 in order to describe the context for the schools involved.

1980 Census Information by District

District	5	18	19	20	21	40	41	44	45
Total # of people	931	2616	3367	4733	1908	3734	1919	785	2479
# black	915	2590	3278	4448	1876	3381	1839	783	2471
# white	16	26	89	285	32	353	80	2	8
Total # families	241	611	737	953	386	756	377	162	528
# intact marriages	115	254	364	348	144	144	92	62	98
# female-headed house	102	297	318	551	191	576	266	84	404
Total # families below poverty in 1979	77	289	283	512	199	570	265	85	347
% of total	30.9	46.4	38.6	54.1	50.6	75.0	67.6	53.1	62.9

Table 1

The Center for Research in Educational Policy housed at Memphis State University was given permission by the Superintendent to document and describe the deregulation program during the initial implementation period of three years. This researcher obtained permission to complete this study as part of that documentation effort. The larger study was designed to identify "... major processes, problems and successes ..." (Etheridge, et. al., 1990, p. 5) of the deregulation program. Information concerning each of the three years was gathered through document analysis, participant observations, individual interviews, and group interviews. Interviews were planned to include "... participants from each of the project's constituent groups (principals, teachers, parents, community members, central office personnel, and MEA staff)" (Etheridge, et. al., 1990, p. 6). Grade-level and department chairs are both teachers as well as members of the principals advisory committee.

Sampling

In each project school, five to seven teachers were selected to fulfill positions of leadership while continuing to maintain their status as classroom teachers. The titles of grade-level chairman and department chairman were used to identify these teachers as leaders. Some of these teacher leaders have responsibilities that are clustered to include more than one subject, content area, or grade level.

The schools involved in the deregulation program were contacted and given information concerning the larger study as well as the researcher's involvement in the work of the Center For Research in Educational Policy. Because of the schools' participation in the observation and documentation process, all teacher leaders and administrators were identified as possible interview subjects.

All principals, and teachers presently identified as leaders, were given information concerning this particular study. They were also asked for permission to be interviewed and audio-taped. Of the 50 teacher leaders identified, 49 agreed to be interviewed. Six of the seven principals also agreed to be included in the study.

Techniques for Data Collection

This type of study lends itself to a qualitative, or interpretive approach. According to Miles and Huberman (1984),

> ... qualitative research is essentially an investigative process .... One makes gradual sense of a social phenomenon, and does it in large part by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing, and classifying the object of one's study. (p. 37)

The interpretive paradigm does not set out to change what is already in existence. Rather, it is a way of understanding the participants by studying the words, names, and labels they use to describe their experiences (Zeichner & Gore, 1990).

A semi-structured interview was employed to investigate the research questions. The interview process focused on the teachers' preparation for leadership roles within a shared decision making setting. The questions allowed the teachers ample opportunity to express their opinions. Probes were used to clarify the answers. This approach allowed the researcher to gather information concerning the teachers' reactions and perceptions with as much accuracy as possible (Bogdan & Biklen,1982; Williamson, Karp, & Dolphin, 1977).

Although the primary focus of this study was to determine the perceptions of the teachers, a similar interview was used with the principals at each school. The views of the principals add an additional dimension of understanding to the study.

Each interview took approximately 45-60 minutes to conduct. During the interviews, the researcher took notes and used an audio-tape recorder whenever permission to do so was granted. The interviews were transcribed to HyperQual computer software which was used to organize and assist in the analysis of individual responses.

Techniques for Data Analysis

After the interviews had been completed and the data recorded in the computer program, analysis was conducted. As described by Miles and Huberman (1984), analysis is a process of reducing the data, portraying patterns and finally drawing conclusions.

Data reduction consisted of organizing the data around the research questions and the identification of important themes or topics (Patton, 1984; Miles & Huberman, 1984). Miles and Huberman (1984) described this process of labeling as developing "bins." "Bins come from theory and experience, and (often) from the general objectives of the study envisioned" (p. 28). For the purposes of this study, these categories were based on the review of the literature, interview and research questions and the type of answers obtained from field tested interviews (Patton, 1984; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

The labels assigned to each file or bin became the "start list" for the purpose of coding the data (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

> This kind of approach requires an analysis of the verbal categories used by participants and/or staff in a program to break up the complexity of reality into parts. It is a fundamental purpose of language to tell us what is important by giving it a name and therefore separating it from other things with other names. (Patton, 1987, p.150-1)

While working with the data from the interviews, the start list was refined and expanded.

Procedures for Data Analysis

This study was generally qualitative in nature and content analysis provides "... a quantitative description of communications" (Williamson, Karp & Dalphin, 1977). As a result of content analysis, response frequencies for each question were reported for the entire group as well as by category. Each set of responses was ordered from most frequent to least frequent. Results of these frequencies became the basis for the data portrayal and displays.

Analysis of the data was then completed by using frequency as a criterion to respond to the research questions. Examples of the interviewees' answers and comments were included in the analysis to add to the meaning of the responses. "Essentially, words and numbers keep one another analytically honest" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 55).

Frequencies alone may not convey the same feeling that the interviewee's words add to the analysis.

Answers were analyzed by question, role (teacher or principal), individual school site, as well as school level (elementary, junior high, and high school).

Description of study participants

The 49 teachers interviewed for this study were highly educated and experienced. The average age of the group was 44 with an average of 21 years of teaching experience. The educational level of the group ranged from five teachers who had bachelors degrees to one teacher with a doctorate. The great majority of the teachers (43) reported having a masters degree. Nineteen of these teachers have a masters plus 45 credit hours toward their next degree. The teacher group was predominantly black and female. Six of the nine male teachers were at the high school level, two at the junior high level, and one at the elementary level.

Of the six principals interviewed, two had been principals of their respective schools before site-based decision making was implemented. One had been assigned to the school as the assistant principal during the first year of site-based decision making. The original principal was removed at the close of the first year. At the time of the interview, the assistant was acting principal. The acting principal and the other three principals were all new to their sites as a result of the site-based project. The average age of the principal group was 48. The principals reported an average of 18 years of teaching experience and they all have masters degrees. Three of the six reported having a masters plus 45 credit hours toward their next degree. The principals group consisted of two males and four females, all of whom were black.

Findings

Content analysis procedures were used to identify the perceptions teachers and administrators held about various aspects of site-based decision making. The perceptions most frequently mentioned were the basis for the important patterns (themes) synthesized from the data. The most important patterns related to each research question are presented and briefly discussed in the following pages.

Research Question 1: Skills, abilities, and attitudes teacher leaders brought to the job

The teachers were asked what skills, abilities, knowledge, and attitudes they had brought to the job that helped them to be successful. The first pattern, *personal*

characteristics, was determined from the most frequent responses. This pattern includes descriptors such as: energy, endurance, commitment, loyalty, open-mindedness, being cheerful, having high expectations, being creative, flexible, a positive attitude, personality, value system, being versatile, fair, not knowing how to quit, and having good self esteem.

Responses concerning the second pattern, *teaching experience*, included not only number of years teaching but experience in an inner-city setting. A typical answer was, "I have lots of experience, a total of 21 years. I worked with inner city children before." The third pattern, *expertise*, summarizes the descriptions that teachers gave of knowledge in their content area or pedagogy. *Communication skills* and *educational level* were mentioned often enough to become the fourth and fifth important patterns.

When the principals were asked what skills, abilities, knowledge, and attitudes they thought these teachers had brought to the job, *personal characteristics*, once again became the most frequently mentioned pattern. The principals ranked *teaching experience* as second along with *expertise* and *team work*.

Discussion. As a follow up to this question, the teachers were asked what qualities they would look for if they had the authority to select their own replacements. The descriptions given by the teachers of themselves were fairly consistent with their ideal replacements. Educational level dropped in importance and the ability to work as a team member was listed more often when describing the ideal chair. One teacher summarized the importance of team work by saying,

> People who work well with others. Those who bend over backwards to get all people working together, get all involved. People who show that they respect the opinions and the information that each person might contribute.

When the principals were asked what qualities they looked for while involved in the process of hiring teacher leaders, they were unanimous in their belief that teaching experience and expertise were important assets for the position. One principal reported looking for, "what experience they had had in grade-chairing, working with, and managing people." Another principal described the teachers they had chosen as chairs by saying, "Competent, I think they feel competent in their field."

Research Question 2: Skills, abilities, and attitudes teacher leaders learned while involved in site-based decision making

The teachers were asked to describe the skills, abilities, knowledge and attitudes they had learned during the past two years of site-based decision making. The first pattern was identified as *the site-based decision making process*. This pattern includes answers concerning the collaborative effort, working with the local school council, running

meetings, and reaching consensus. A typical response was, "There is a sharing process involved that I really wasn't familiar with before site-based decision making." The second pattern identified as *interactions*, was determined from responses that represent the teachers' struggle with the larger number of interactions required of the staff. One teacher summarized these interactions by saying,

> I've had to learn most of all how to respect other people and what they believe. I have to be able to respect their right to agree or disagree. I think I have reached that point.

Self development was mentioned often enough to become the third important pattern. The teachers discussed improvements in areas such as: patience, self expression, a sense of humor, and not being judgmental or selfish.

When principals were asked what they thought the teacher leaders had learned over the past two years, they unanimously identified *interactions* as their first pattern. Half of the principals communicated a feeling that the teachers had improved in their knowledge of *the site-based decision making process*.

Discussion. Self development was described as an area of improvement by teachers on the high school and elementary level. On the junior high level self development was mentioned by a few teachers at one site and none of the teachers at the second site. All other responses were equally distributed across all sites and levels.

Research Question 3: Perceptions of areas where teacher leaders still need to improve

When the teachers were asked in which areas they still needed to improve, *self development* was the first pattern across all levels. Once again the area of self development included the need for patience and self expression. The teachers also added descriptors such as: persistence, energy, time management, organization, and breaking with tradition. The second pattern identified as *contextual improvement*, was determined from responses describing problems with the school building, the faculty, the neighborhood, and the students. A typical response was,

> Since this is an inner-city school, I am seeing that we need to do more work within the home. We need to go to the homes more and really get the parents interested in what we are doing up here.

Interactions was mentioned often enough to be identified as the third pattern. The final important pattern was identified as *instructional improvement*. The teacher leaders communicated a desire to improve instruction in areas such as: individualizing, evaluating student needs, moving away from traditional teaching strategies, and monitoring the curriculum. One teacher summarized the instructional improvement pattern by saying,

> I feel that I've had an abundance of training, that I should be able to handle the job. The only problem is being able to cope with all the new things that come into play with teaching and learning today. It's not just simple reading, writing, and arithmetic.

When principals were asked in which areas they perceived the teachers leaders as needing continued improvement, *interaction* was mentioned often enough to be the first pattern. The second pattern according to the principals was *self development*. All other responses by the principals were spread evenly among a variety of topics.

Discussion. It is interesting to note that while interaction was the third important pattern, it was mentioned most often by elementary teachers than by either high school or junior high level teachers. On the elementary level, interaction ranked as the second most important pattern. On the junior high and high school level interaction ranked fourth in importance.

The majority of the teachers interviewed were highly educated and experienced. However, they often started their answer to this question by communicating the idea that improvement was an ongoing process and they did not perceive themselves as being anywhere close to finished. As one teacher said, "I hope I never get through improving."

Research Question 4: Teacher leaders' perceptions of their preparation for a leadership role within a site-based decision making structure

The teachers were asked whether training had been available to prepare them for their leadership role and what form it had taken. Thirty-one of the 49 teachers interviewed described training as having been available. A typical response was, "We've had staff development after staff development." The majority of the teachers reported that training had been available primarily through workshops. The workshops that were provided typically dealt with the site-based decision making process. The workshops included topics such as: consensus building, conflict management, communication, climate, group dynamics, teaching styles, team building, and site-based decision making.

Discussion. When answering this question the respondents stated that training had been provided by central office personnel, outside consultants, and site-based staff development committees. At one site, four of the six teachers reported that training had not been made available. Two teachers at this site reported that training was available, yet only one teacher perceived the training efforts as helpful. Fourteen teachers from the remaining six sites described the training as having been helpful while another 10 teachers described it as minimally helpful. As one teacher stated,

> We've had the training and we've had some opportunities to use the training. I just want more. I want to feel comfortable in knowing that I know what this is about

and what I am supposed to be doing. Then I want more opportunities so I can feel that it is a part of me.

As a follow up to this question the teachers were asked how they had developed the skills, abilities, knowledge, and attitudes they had brought to the job. The majority of teachers described *experiences related to education* as most important to their development. These experiences included the memory of their childhood teachers as well as their own teaching experiences. *Personal characteristics* and *background* were mentioned as equally important. *Personal characteristics* included comments about: intelligence, creativity, high self esteem, and a love of children. The pattern, *background*, encompassed that part of the teacher's life that is touched by their parents or siblings, type of upbringing, and religious influences.

Research Question 5: Teachers' perceptions of how training for leadership could be improved

When the teachers were given an opportunity to discuss ways that the training process could be improved, their suggestions generated three general patterns. Theses patterns included preservice education, training for leadership, and site-based decision making training needs.

The teachers identified *preservice education* as an area where improvements could be made. The majority of the teachers communicated a concern that college courses were not adequately preparing students for the realities of the job. The teachers suggested that the time spent in student teaching should be increased. They also recommended that students be exposed to more real life teaching experiences. A typical suggestion was,

> I would put a lot of emphasis on hands on training - in the classroom training. Rather than sitting there for four years with only a semester of training. Let them actually see the kind of things that are going on, even if it meant extending beyond the four years of college.

The second general pattern, *training for leadership*, centered around the teachers desire to see a variety of training situations. The teachers continued to describe workshops as useful in training for leadership. However they also communicated a desire to see on-the-job training. A typical suggestion was, "Give them opportunities to serve in leadership positions and roles. Delegate responsibilities that require leadership qualities, then try to support their development in every way." Learning to work as a team was also mentioned as necessary for the development of leadership. One teacher summarized this need by saying,

> In order to be a leader, the first thing you have to do is deal with people. They all have feelings, desires, and motivations. Some motivations are different than others. You have to be able to bring all those different personalities toward one goal.

In the third pattern, *site-based decision making training needs*, the teachers suggested that there should be more training given to all involved before site-based decision making began. A typical response was, "more training on the front end, because when you look at empowerment and you look at site-based decision making, you really need adequate training to really pull this thing off." Other teachers suggested that the topics related to site-based decision making needed to be reviewed during the year in order to keep people moving forward. The need for more parent training was also suggested. The teachers felt that in order for parents to really share in decision making, they should have adequate training.

Discussion. The teachers had trouble answering the question concerning how training for leadership should ideally be structured. Often they restated a description of the type of person they would hire or described how they function as leaders. Given the fact that their own experience with training for a leadership position was limited to attending college classes and workshops, it is not surprising that these teachers had difficulty envisioning any other training options. Less than half of the teachers interviewed were able to discuss professional development options such as on the job training, observations, or peer groups. However, the teachers were confident that they had leadership capabilities. As one teacher stated,

> Teachers have quite a bit to offer related to leadership and affecting change in this particular setting. We're on the line, we know what's going on. We know what the needs are because we are directly involved with the clientele.

Unintended outcomes

During the course of the study, several interesting points become evident. Throughout the interview the teachers spoke about change. During a warm-up question the teachers were asked how they had gotten involved in the site-based decision making program. Teachers at all levels expressed a desire to be a part of the changes planned. As one teacher stated, "I wanted to see the kinds of changes that would happen at the schools."

The teachers expected that training for and implementation of sited-based decision making would bring about changes in the way the school functioned. However, breaking with tradition was difficult. One teacher summarized the problem by saying, "Superficially you say you are doing something, but actually you are thinking traditionally." The need to break with tradition was not perceived as limited to teachers. One teacher suggested that before implementing a site-based decision making program, "they need to make sure the administrators are really ready to leave the traditional role." The teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the level of instructional changes achieved thus far. They

communicated a desire to see greater and "more important" changes related to curriculum and instruction result from site-based decision making.

Another area of concern was the perception of conflict and resentment among staff members. Conflict was reported at six of the seven sites. The problems stemmed from two general areas. The first was reported as rifts that had developed between teachers new to the school and those who had been assigned to that school prior to site-based decision making. The second area was the inability of a few administrators to truly share decision making. Comments concerning conflict and resentment were often made "off the record" and were made by about one-fourth of the teachers interviewed. The reports of conflict were personal in nature and site specific. It would be difficult to generalize any particular problem to other site-based decision making programs.

The majority of the teachers interviewed communicated a desire to see site-based decision making continue. One teacher summarized the commitment to site-based decision making by saying,

> I hope that site-based decision making is here to stay. I hope that it is going to turn education around and make better things happen for the children in the schools. And as long as anyone thinks that I am capable of serving in a leadership role, I'm willing to do it.

Conclusions

Training within the Memphis City school-based decision making program has focused on improving skills and techniques. In order to develop leadership capabilities, training needs to go beyond those skills and techniques that lend themselves to traditional staff development approaches. The teachers consistently understood that their leadership capabilities were a result of those personal characteristics and the experiential background they had developed over time. Principals also exhibited knowledge of the importance of experience in developing leadership. Training for leadership should include ongoing developmental processes that enhance personal characteristics and experiential background. However, there remains a number of unanswered questions about the most effective approaches to leadership development and training.

Teachers and principals involved in changing roles need to be prepared for change on a personal as well as an organizational level. Reform efforts by their very nature require change. Within the structure of the Memphis City Deregulated Program, both administrative and teaching positions were declared open. The hiring process was designed to identify people who believed in site-based decision making and were willing to promote change. From the information gathered during this study it can be concluded that

the school principals are key factors in the success of site-based decision making. This was also true of the training efforts. At those sites where principals encouraged collaboration, and understood the supporting role of training, teachers were more positive about site-based decision making and the change involved in the reform effort.

Training efforts in the areas of leadership and dealing with change should be extended to administrators and local school councils as well as teachers. Training should be available prior to implementation of the program and should include all participants. However, training is an ongoing process and should be continued through every stage of the implementation process.

Elementary, junior high, and high school teachers responded differently to the questions concerning skills learned during site-based decision making and areas in which they still needed to improve. The variations may be due to the differences in their structure and cultures.

Teachers and administrators have different perceptions about the most important roles that teachers should play in site-based decision making. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and communicated prior to implementation of any restructuring program.

All of the principals and the majority of the teacher leaders believe that site-based decision making should continue and were supportive of a leadership role for teachers. Despite the disequilibrium involved in organizational change, teachers and principals will support almost any effort they perceive as beneficial to students.

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